

## Advancement.

BY MARY C. MILLER.

"Now the Lord had said unto Abram get thee out of thy country and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house unto a land that I will shew thee."

These are the words of the Lord unto Abram when he was dwelling with his people in Haran. Abraham was called the "Father of the faithful." Now the question would seem to be in place, are all his children to leave their country and kindred and father's house, and go unto the place where the Lord directs them? In our Bible class the other evening, the question was asked why it was that God wished Abram to go from his native land and dwell in a country which was new to him? We are not told just why it was, but we may reasonably conclude that it was a type of the Christian life. Abram journeyed from place to place. How suggestive this is to us. We too are to journey from one place to another from one truth to another, remembering what is truth to us at one time becomes untruth at another. Can we prove this? Well let us see. The old world believed that the earth was flat, &c., &c., that was truth to them, is it truth now? We consider it a mistake, we have journeyed from one truth to another or from one idea to another. It was not really truth, but truth to them. It was the best they had. Now my dear friends let us learn a lesson from our forefathers and advance, journey on from one truth to another let us leave our father's country let us leave our kindred and settle in a country which the Lord will show unto us. It is not only our privilege but our bounded duty God wishes us to possess a country of our own. The country which others have journeyed unto, the truths which others have grasped and made their own, are ours only by inheritance. If we advance to the place where the Lord directs us, we have made our mark in the world, we have left our "footprints upon the sands of time," we have conquered a country and it is ours, the Lord has given it to us, and then only can we feel that we have gone unto the place where the Lord directs us. Emerson says, "Be content with a little light so it is your own." Come out from the world, you cannot prove to me that God requires a certain cut of the garments in order to come out from the world, but I can prove to you that he requires honesty in business transactions. I can prove to you that God directs us to be "a peculiar people zealous of good works." I can prove to you by many infallible proofs, that we should obey God's word. Can you prove to me that any man, or number of men, has a right since we have God's word, to bind anything upon the people which it does not bind upon them?

Advancement—diligence in traveling to the place where the Lord directs—and that place is truth, verity and uprightness. Abram was no policy man. Or if he was he was longer headed than policy men are these days. He knew better where to place his stakes. Faith was Abram's policy and if we wish to go where the Lord directs, it must be our policy. Let us not think that our father's have attained unto the mark for us, we must still go on, forever, like the mighty orb of light moving steadily in its orbit as God has directed it. We must move where God directs if we are Abraham's children. God blessed Abram because he walked by faith. It would have been all right should Abram have summoned a large number of his countrymen and asked advice about going to a new country would it not?

Does not Solomon say that in a multitude of counselors there is safety? "but had he not said it then?" I fancy I hear some one say, No, but Abram was successful, he walked on safe ground. Abram knew that God was the multitude for safety. Abram did not stop to consider, he was no questioner, he was a man of faith, and he knew where to place his faith, where to anchor his hope, and he journeyed to the place where the Lord directed him. "But Abram you have changed! you did not in times past occupy the ground you do now!" Yes Abram has changed. He does not deny it. It is his only hope, it is his salvation. Must he not go unto him who has the oil for sale, and buy for himself? Can he borrow oil from you, have you anything to spare to him? But do you intend

to say to him that you do not change? Where lies the east? morn's kindling robe creates that spot alone. Chase the red orient round the globe, each country hath its own. And let us remember "What's east to us may be perchance the west of other men." What is truth to us may be the reverse to others. There are many things which our father's held as truths, both in nature and revelation, that we do not. We have journeyed on, we have left our father's country and have pitched our tents in the place where the Lord has directed us. Have we sinned by doing so? Have we not followed in the footsteps of old father Abraham? If we have not followed in his tracks, we are not his children. If we are not faithful to God as he was faithful to God we are not his children. We cannot be true to ourselves unless we are true to God. We cannot be true to our fathers, unless we are true to God. We cannot be true to God, unless we are true to our father's and to ourselves, and therefore we must advance.

The best men of every age are those who go on and possess their country. Come and let us go with them, for truths sought out by ones own self are fresher, sweeter, riper and sounder to us and will do us a greater amount of good, vastly greater than when gotten second handed. Can we believe this? If we have not tried it let us not delay any longer. Stay not in Haran all your days. Tarry not in the fatherland all your lives. Jesus says leave father and mother and come and serve me.

There was a sermon preached at the German Baptist church not a great while ago from the text: "we are servants." Servants not to men, not to one another, but to God. It does us good to listen to such sermons. Let us go on and consider these things, possess a country where the Lord directs us, not where man directs us, for man is no sure guide. We want something sure, something we may depend upon, and that must be God's word. Truth from the pure fountain. A little light of our own gathering, a little oil of our purchasing. When we consider the vast amount of country yet unoccupied, or but partially or poorly occupied it is a wonder that so many people are content to stay in their father's and kindred's country. Are they the children of faithful Abraham? Abraham was a fact in the world—he was a reality. His faith reached to heaven. He said to all I am a man. I have as good a right here in God's world as you, or you, or you; and I will go where God directs me even though I must leave all. I cannot ask when God speaks. When God says leave father, mother, sister, brother, I cannot leave any hold upon God, and cling to flesh and blood. If I do I am undone. I am a man no longer. I am no power for good in the world. I stand not as a fact—a reality, I have lost my hold upon heaven, the chain is broken the link is missing. Must I forbear to speak the truth for fear some one's air castle may be blown over by it? Do not be afraid to speak truth as near as you can get to it. What if there is a revolution? let it come, the world revolves, the stars and all the planets go from one place to another, the moon does not stand still for her neighbors convenience, but on she goes to the place where the Lord directs her. Oh man, man, man. Can it be that the noblest, the fairest, the mightiest of all God's creation would lose their individuality by not going out as the Lord directs them? lose themselves by staying in their father's country when God commands them to go forward? Moses did not stay in his Father's country. Ruth went out from her Father's country. The queen of Sheba went out from her own land and she saw more than she expected. The half had not been told her. Can we get anything out of these words for us? Can people tell us all of the beautiful, the wonderful, the good? They could not tell her. Naaman went out of his own country to be healed of the leprosy. Christ went from his own people and took as many with him as were faithful and willing to go out where the Lord directed. John left his high priest acquaintance and followed Christ even though it was to see him hung upon the cross. Paul counted every thing as lost but found a new country. That is the reason he could "mightily convince the Jews that Jesus was the Christ." He had gone where the Lord directed

him. Do we imagine Abram left his Father's house without any regrets, without any heart-pangs? I do not believe that he did simply for this reason, he was a kind and considerate man and no doubt had made some warm friends whom he had learned to love. Paul speaks in a touching manner about the friends whom he had left behind him. Abram says to his nephew Lot, we are brethren, let there be no strife between us. Abram showed his wisdom, he showed the wisdom of mature years and it is to be regretted that all do not fortify themselves against selfishness as he had fortified himself. Let there be no strife between us, Abram surely had more faith than Lot "he believed he could eat all things" and God was with him to bless him. Abram gave Lot his choice but he who had the most faith fared the best in the end.

Is it so to day? When a man has faith enough in God to be a man under all circumstances is he not sure to come out all right. There can be no uncertainty about it. He has God's blessed promises at his side. Abram called Lot his brother, their spirits were alike, that is they run in the same direction they loved right. Perhaps that is the reason Abram took Lot with him when he went out, kindred spirits flow together. Why is it that those two persons are such good friends? Take David and Jonathan. It cannot be said that they were alike, just the reverse in many things, but they soon learned to deeply admire each others abilities. They saw in each other the power of going out of themselves into new fields of thought and action. See what a beautiful tribute David bequeathed to the memory of his friend. Abram and Lot were both faithful. Lot had faith in God's words or he would not have gone with him. Now they are in the unknown world, do they still have faith in each other and in God? or do they not need faith in the other world? Abram was true and faithful to man, to himself and to God. "He walked by faith and not by sight" but he went into a land of scarcity, yes but by going further on he found plenty. He did not go back to his Father's country any more. Abram's Father journeyed—our fathers have journeyed they have advanced, they wish us to advance, they would have us to go on to the place where the Lord directs us. Should there be any who do not wish the world of mankind to go on from one truth to another, they are not fathers like Abraham.

Terah started for the land of promise, but died in Haran. He took his sons that far, why he stopped there we are not informed. Abram took Lot with him. God was not displeased about it was he? He took care of Lot when sinners were destroyed and he cared for his descendants far above other nations. We must not be afraid to take our friends with us into a good new country if they wish to go. Abram showed true generosity in taking Lot with him and by giving him the choice of the country, but suppose Lot would have taken the best and then tried to make Abram think otherwise, do you think Abram would have acquiesced? I am quite sure he would not. He would have stood in the sight of God and man deceived—not a pleasant situation, but he had faith enough in himself and in God to treat his friend with that courtesy which the nature of the case demanded. How could there be any strife between them? Faithful men work for peace. We are told that Abram gathered souls, what a rich harvest he was reaping—gathering souls on his way to Canaan. This is also a very suggestive thought to us. Are we his children? Do we gather souls here and there as we pass through going out where the Lord directs? It was a great thing in those days for a man to travel a thousand miles hunting a home. His journey was no short one. He could not get upon the cars and go in a few days. Long and weary months and years rolled away and still they had not reached Canaan the land of promise. Are we discouraged if God's promises are not reached, not attained unto in a short time? Let us think of Moses and Abram travelling to the land of Canaan. Abram did not worship himself, nor his friends, nor his countrymen, but he worshiped that being who is the Lord over all things. He worshiped the God who can balance the mountains in scales, and the hill in his hand; hold the great waters of the ocean in the palm of his hand, and scaling the heavens, visit other planets and all the host of the starry regions. He worshiped that being who rules over worlds, nations and in the hearts of men. God loves to rule in the hearts of men. Abram loved such a ruler. He admired him for his greatness, but he loved him for the "still small voice." Therefore he was able to do as God directed him. He was willing to leave friends, kindred and country, and journey into a land that was new and strange to him, a land where his fathers had not journeyed. If we are willing to do as Abram done we are his children and heirs of the promise, spiritually.